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HUMBLE DEFENCE
OF

The Exeter Bill

For the Uniting the *Parishes*, and settling

A Maintenance upon their

MINISTERS.

Shewing the Equity and Easiness of it,

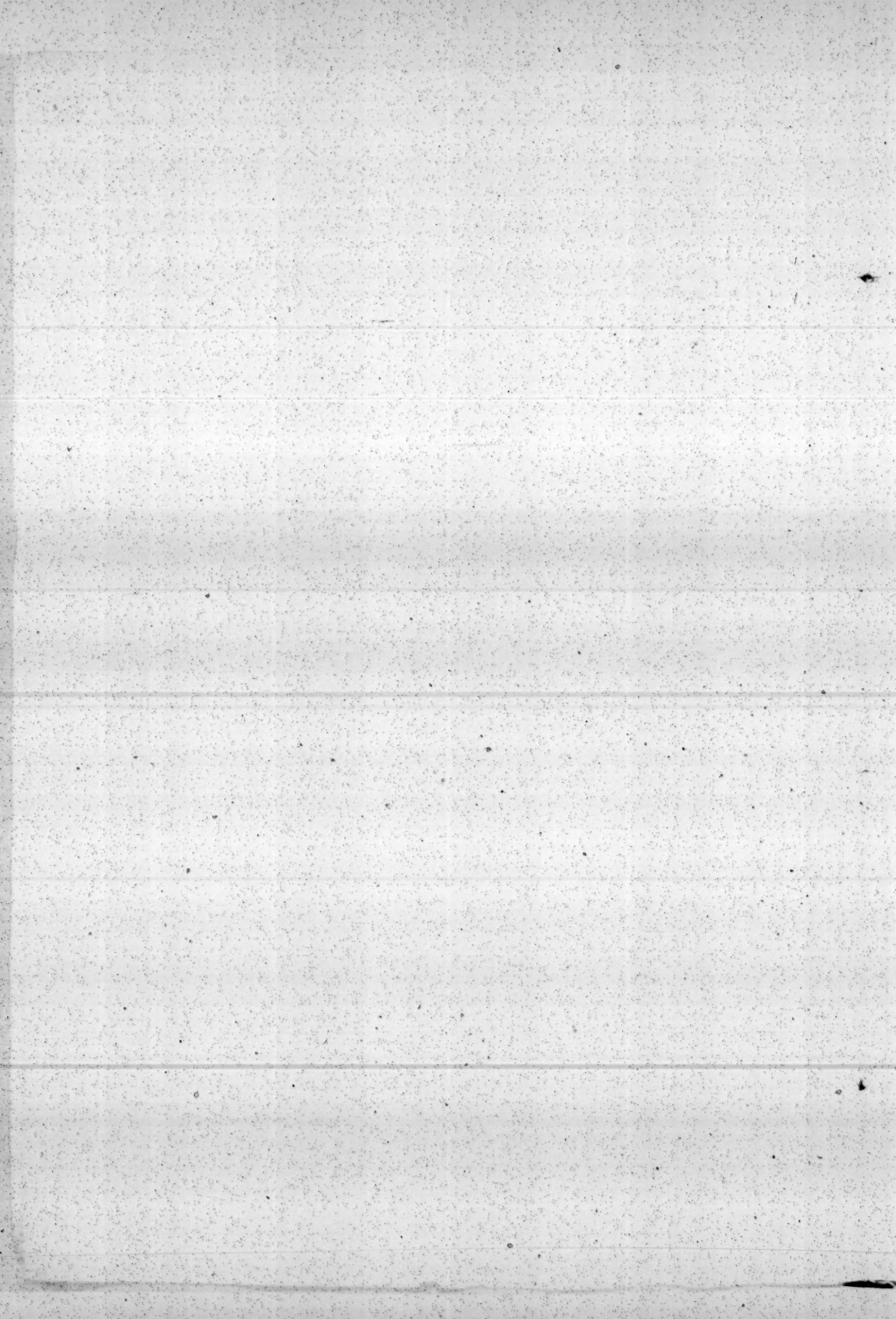
by way of *Letter* to a Member of the Honourable

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Et Dei deo.

LONDON,

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*An humble Defence of the Exeter Bill
for the Uniting the Parishes, &c.*

SIR,

Taking for granted the fitness of a competent Maintenance for the Ministry, I shall evince the reasonableness of our Bill by this Method.

1. The Necessity that this Maintenance should be legal.
2. The Equity and Fitness of the Exeter Bill to that purpose.
3. The easiness of it, in respect of those who are to defray it.

And when I have so done I shall expose the weakness, if I cannot still the noise of those Objections which I have yet heard, or can possibly imagine may be urged against it.

The first thing to be considered, The Necessity that this Maintenance should be legal. That 'tis just according to the Laws of Natural Equity it cannot be questioned by any, who shall acknowledge it so, for the vilest Labourer after he hath done his Work to require and demand what he adjudges reasonable

for his pains ; who may be ready to tell his Employer too, that he does not take it as his Kindness or Charity , but as his own proper and just right. And why a Minister of the Gospel should not be allowed the same privilege, let any contrary Opiner shew the distinction. But what I am here asserting is somewhat above this, viz. That 'tis very necessary that the maintenance of the Ministry be legal. Which appears fully upon these two Considerations , The safety of Souls, and the Peace and Unity of Church and Kingdom.

1. For the greater safety of Souls , in the more faithful discharge of the solemn Office by such as are thus secured. That those spiritual Persons have bodies to be provided for, as well as other men , that they have necessities to be satisfied as well as others, is too notorious to be denied. And if so, when their Tongues shall be tied by their humour some Parishioners Purse-strings, they shall be allowed to speak very little more then what they please ; they must be Mum in many material points, lest the heat of their destate quite melt away their Coin and Courtesie together. If they Cant not to them in their own Dialect, and confine not their Discourse within the Circle of their opinion , farewell all promises of Contribution. Insomuch as many may be compelled often-times to an unworthy compliance to get bread ; so many mouths as their single one must fill

fill, not being able to live upon the Air; nor can they expect they should be stopt by a miracle. But how unfit 'tis that any in that sacred Function should have any check upon their spirits in the discharge of their duty, any thing might cause them to prevaricate in so weighty an affair (on which the immortal souls of men depend) may be evidently enough inferred from that liberal and free allowance which the great God settled upon them under the Jewish Oeconomy, and which our blessed Saviour hath confirmed under the Christian. Their portion was separate from any humane allowance; and no man was to have the meteing of it out; which we may well conclude was purposely to encourage them in the delivery of the full and whole mind of God without fear or favour. By which Sirs, you see how necessary 'tis upon this account.

2. This Necessity is farther inferrable, for the Peace and Unity of the Church and Kingdom: what mischiefs and inconveniences commonly haunt those places, whose maintenance is benevolentiary? How are they ordinarily Seminaries of Schism and Faction? Let who will observe it, he will find no places fuller of disaffected persons of all Ages and Sexes both to the Church and State, then those which have the slenderest legal maintenance for their Minister. Meer necessity (which hath no Law) I am confident compelling many Preachers into that

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compliance which otherwise they would never have been guilty of; but being once out of necessity involved unhappily in it, they not being able well to extricate themselves, are inforced to attempt the maintaining their irregular practises, out of (falsly accounted) *Self-interest* and *Reputation*, to avoid the scandalous imputation of *Knave* or *Hypocrite*. This I fear upon examination will be found the true reason of some mens defection from a due conformity both to the Civil and Ecclesiastical Discipline. Now the Peace of Church and Kingdom, is so excellent and so weighty a thing, as it cannot be purchased at too dear a rate if short of sin. And truly neither can well expect to enjoy that Calmness and Tranquility, is most passionately wished them, 'till there be some happy Redress in this particular. But if it cannot be presently remedied as far as it should be, I hope from the Favour and Piety of our wise and religious Governours, it will as far as it may be. To which for this City I trust the earnest desire of the most considerable part of it will happily avail. And so I proceed to the

3. Thing which I proposed, To assert the Fitness and Equity of the *Exeter* Bill to this purpose: which I shall do as to its several particulars.

1. As to the matter of it, or the thing it self, a clearer conviction for the present Oppugners in this instance we cannot possibly find, than their own practice

practice and confession heretofore. Even those very persons who now with such heat and violence oppose this Bill (for the greatest part of them) did yet prevail from the late *Usurpers* for an Act to this purpose, with this difference, that whereas now there is an endeavour made for the settlement of 900 l. a year upon 9 Churches, they obtained 1000 l. for 6.* 800 l.
 which is yet to be seen in the Journal of those times. M. St
 As well in the Answer to the Petition called, *The* and
Case of Exeter,* where we find these very words [As the Shea
 to that Clause of the Act to raise 800 l. per ann. to main- Wardary
 tain the Ministers by a Rate, we think it is reasonable; and Coll
 for before a few well-minded People did voluntarily bear the Act
 that burden, and at least three parts in four of the City P. 10.
 paid or contributed nothing, nor would subscribe to pay a
 penny; and so most part of the richer sort as well as others
 bore no share in the maintenance of the Ministry: There-
 upon it was thought [reasonable] that a rate equally on
 the Tenements and Estates of all, should be proportioned,
 and so it would be both equal and easie: and a little after,
 in the same Paragraph--- And the Act doth order that
 no Minister should have less than 100 l. per ann. to the end
 it might be impartially distributed: and a little farther -
 --And many other Corporations have had such Acts to im-
 power them to lay an Equal Tax to maintain their Mini-
 sters, [and all, for ought we know, with great rea-
 son, had the Powers been lawful by which those
 Acts were made.] Thus far our Adversaries be-
 fore

fore they thought on it, became our Advocates. Now why it should be so just then, and so unjust now, I can see no reason. I am very loath to suggest, That 'tis not the Thing but the present Government they seem to condemn as unjust: and that had they the same Governours again, and their same disaffected Teachers, that then 'twould be acknowledged again as just as ever. Insomuch 'twill be expected, that all as produce Arguments against the present Bill, should first answer their own for theirs. If their faces were not of the true metal they must blush to be overcome by their own Weapons; and especially to give the World to see how far these [honest] mens practises are distant from their avowed judgments and opinions--*Hic murus ab æneus esto, nil conscire sibi, nulla pallescere culpa.* So much for confirmation of the fitness and equity of the Design.

2. As for the sum to be raised we shall likewise upon examination find it to be very just and fair, 900 l. per ann. for the maintenance of 9 Ministers, cannot be reputed unreasonable, either for them to receive, or the People to pay.

1. Not for the Ministers to receive; this is no more then what, time was, they thought little enough to allow their own Preachers. And truly how much can 100 l. per ann. be more then enough for the maintenance of a Family, especially in a City where all things vend at the dearest rates? And for the furnishing

nothing but a competent Library, and to defray incidental charges? This certainly is an allowance so low, that the veriest Miser cannot reasonably deny, for the support but of a slender family in any *creditable* *figure*. And even this allowed, they had need be very parsimonious, and live a great while too, to be reimbursed the monies expended in their education. But 'tis obvious to remarque, that an inconsiderable Revenue shall be envied a Clergy-man, let him be never so deserving, when the greatest shall come to any ordinary Artisan with congratulation and applause. Whereas why they only of all other persons should entail poverty and misery upon themselves and Families, let all indifferent Arbiters determine. Not,

2. Is it unreasonable for the People to pay? The sum in gross is not to exceed 200 *l.* yearly; nor at the utmost is any to be rated above 18 *l.* in the pound. How much it will be under, I shall have occasion to consider anon under the Business of the Imposition, when all ought to pay something of their annual increase, let it be never so little. 'Tis what is already established by the same Law as we hope this here will be in the Country upon every little Tenement of Land, though not worth above two Nobles *per ann.* And why Houses, which exceed in their Rents generally some very good Farms in the County, should not bear some little proportion, when a Shop but of a yard of ground shall yield a better Crop than 100

Acres elsewhere, we must refer it to the excellent judgments of the House to determine. But whoever they are as preach the but too catching Doctrine of Covetousness and Sacrilege to the People, are very ill Politicians; there is not a more direct way then this to meet, that they are so solicitous to avoid; The promise of a most plentiful blessing being made to such as are just and conscientious in paying the Priest his due, the defalking of which is called a Robbery of God. I shall crave leave farther only to insert that memorable passage of the Prophet to this purpose, *Mal. 3. 10. Bring ye all the Tithes into the Store-house, that there may be meat in my House, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of Heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.* This, if the great God were thought fit to be trusted, were enough to oblige them in humane policie to be free and liberal in defraying those duties to the Ambassadors of the Most High, which though no Humane Law did so, the Divine binds upon their souls. But that Proverb hath obtained but too far with many, even towards God himself, *They will trust no farther than they see.* But,

II. As for the manner of raising it, The most fair and equitable that can be assigned.

1. 'Tis by a Rate upon all Houses, Lands, Meufnages, &c. within the Precincts of the Bill. But to
this

this some Remonstrate that Personal Estates be rated as well as Real. But as for this, an House-Rent will very easily discharge the thing without any such trouble; and to rate Personal Estate, looks like a too arbitrary way of proceeding, it being left to others to make uncertain guesses at their Neighbours Estates, which is always very ungrateful, and often the occasion of much jangle and quarrel. And what is farther to be considered too, those who have as large a share of Houses in the City as any other, are desirous it should go this way; of which number the present Chamber must be acknowledged to be: though as to our selves the matter be indifferent. But

2. Farther, This Rate is to be made by some of the ablest Inhabitants of each Parish; which too, should be as much as reason can exact in the matter; and is more then was allowed by the Usurpers pretended Act, where the Maior and Justices only, were authorized to *tax and assess*, as the words of it are, *all and every the Inhabitants within the said City. (Vid. Act.)* But now they are not left to be imposed upon by the Arbitrary pleasure or prejudice of any Foreigner; they are to be rated by themselves in their own Parishes, by some of the ablest and indifferentest persons among them. And

3. If this be not sufficient, if any are aggrieved, or unequally burthened, they are left to refer the matter to the Maior and Justices of the City. And

what other or more competent Judges they can desire, I cannot conceive. Are not those persons who are to decide and determine all other differences and controversies among us, upon the sacredness of a solemn Oath, fit to be entrusted in this ? or would they introduce another Government into the City ? or have the matters of the City to be determined by a Jurisdiction out on't ? To clamor for any other Judges in the case, is to impeach those as are over them of baseness and injustice. All other Rates are referred to them and their award, which are of greater value. And though it be impossible that any should hold the Scales of Government so equally, but some or other out of discontent or prejudice, will be found to complain after all possible industry to the contrary, yet not to refer matters to the presupposed Prudence and Equity of our Governours (of both which the Inhabitants of this City have full satisfaction in those that are over them in this place,) as 'tis highly unjust and uncharitable, so 'tis wholly destructive of all Government, and brings in disorder and confusion. Whereas 'tis not the humours of any men that are to be the deciders of matters in controversy, but the known and established Laws, which can do no wrong. Inasmuch, Sir, I hope all reasonable and indifferent persons have no just grounds to complain of any iniquity or injustice in the matter, but that the whole design and

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managery of this pious Proposal, is according to the Laws of the severest Justice and Equity. But how equitable soever it be, it may be reputed very burdensome and heavy; but for this too, I hope to give full satisfaction to all sober persons in touching upon the

III. Thing proposed, To shew the easiness of this rate. 'Twas at first indeed by some disaffected persons, cried up for a great burden, and severe oppression; but the most of those very persons in cooler thoughts, having more wisely considered the matter, have found it far otherwise; and the which I shall undertake to demonstrate from two or three considerations.

i. If we consider the number of the Parishes to be united; no less then 17 to be reduced to 9. Sixteen of which being much smaller then the other, are to be brought into 8. by consolidating two and two, as expressed in the Bill; But the *other being as large as any three else, *S. Mary's Moor. stands as it did: And then what's a great advantage to the business, there are to come into the Consolidation and Rate to this purpose, three other considerable places, belonging to and within the Walls of this City, *Bradnich, Bedford-house, and the Close*; (excepting those few excepted in the Bill,) which for matter of profit, cannot be valued less then one of the best distinct Parishes. Now if it be considered

sidered how small the sum is, compared with the number of the Houses upon which to be raised, 'twill fall far short of the 18 d. proposed, how much you may guess by and by; at the utmost rigour it cannot exceed the foresaid sum, which if it were to be levied to the full, is so far from being any grievance, that it falls far short of what many Peoples voluntary Contributions now are. But how much under that 'twill come, possibly our Adversaries themselves (for some reasons they wot of) would not willingly have known. Nay I have it from good witness, that as considerable a person for estate, and one as little affected to the Church, as most of the Opposers, should acknowledge, that the sum not to be exceeded might have been raised higher in good policie; and whereas now 'tis not exceeding 18 d. would have liked it better, if it had been not exceeding three or four shillings. I am not willing to betray any Priviledges of that City, to which I stand so many ways obliged, and which I am at present to my utmost power asserting. I shall only farther propose this by way of Demonstration to all impartial Considerers, that the sum proposed is altogether unworthy the name of a Burthen. Suppose there are in this Consolidation about 1500 Families, which I believe none that know the City will put me to the trouble to prove,) any of which are not so poor, but are able to allow something to their Minister. Now
if

if but twelve shillings upon a Family, one with another throughout the whole, (a sum so low as scarcely any in the number but are very well able to defray) should be imposed, that would amount to the money desired. And if the meanest are able, without accounting it a burden, well nigh if not altogether to undergo this, 'tis known that the most can, and many do now a great deal better; some giving 20, 30, 40 s. some 3, 4, 5 l. and upwards. But what others do for their *Non-Cons*, is much above this; amounting some to 10 l. some 15 l. some 20 l. and upward to the value of 1000 l. a year for the upholding their faction, as I have often heard confirm'd. Inasmuch what would acknowledg'dly light so very easie, can't any way deserve the name of a Burthen. But then

2. What does somewhat considerably abate this Imposition, is the legal Dues that this way will be absorpt. The *Dominicals*, *Easter-Duties*, with other Perquisites, will amount, honestly paid, to near a fourth part of the sum to be levied; though (what's to be considered) the *Dominicals* at their first Institution were equivalent very nighly to the sum now desired; which is very probably to be inferr'd from this Observation, That many of those Houses in this City which were heretofore fate for 5 l. a year, now yield 30: Besides that innumerable addition of Buildings that has been since made to what formerly were

were here. And if any shall be at the trouble to examine what proportion 5 l. then bore to 30 l. now, he would find that even the Legal Rights then (which are still as yet the same) did bear tantamount the sum laboured for now. So as that 'tis not a Tax, no part of which was obligatory before, but we have a long Prescription for a good part of it alrerdy. Infomuch the whole sum of what's to be anew imposed, will not surmount much more than 600 l. yearly. Now if it be considered what the Imposition but of 600 l. annually, or thereabout, upon this whole City, (as expressed in the Bill) will amount to, (which ought in Justice, only, to be considered, for what was our due before, can't be charg'd as a new Imposition) 'twill then appear a far lighter burthen than what it has been yet imagined.

3. What's farther to be considered as a great encouragement to the present Bill, is the great Abatement in a very few years, if not a total Removal of the poor Rate now raised by the City, through the Expediency of a new raised publick Work-house. The poor Rate of this City (as I have been well informed) amounts to many hundred pounds above what are mentioned in the Bill; which when it shall be considerably lessened, lay down but to five or six hundred pounds yearly, there will be still less reason of complaint. Now that this is not a meer surmise, appears from the great forwardness that House is in,
being

being very near finished, and the very large Endowments it has, and every day is like still to have, to the value of a great many hundred pounds, as likewise the commodiousness of it for this purpose. Inasmuch when all those as live now in all idleness and laziness, upon the sweat of their Neighbours brows, shall be put upon employment, and furnished with such work as they shall be best able to do, they will more comfortably that way relieve themselves, and give the ease of so much expence and cost to others. By which it undeniably appears to all equal Considerers, that when so small a sum as about 600 l. new Impositions shall be raised (blessed be God) upon so large and opulent a City as this, 'twill be very easie, and not burthensom at all. So that, if a Maintenance, and the Necessity of a Legal Maintenance for the Conformable Clergy of this City; If the Equity of the *Exeter* Bill to this purpose, together with the easiness of it, can avail any thing, (as we cannot at all doubt but with such able Judgments to whom it is humbly referr'd 'twill) we shall not at all distrust the happy complement of our hopes.

But how very fair and reasonable soever any thing be, yet if it chances to run counter to some persons private humours or interests, 'twill be sure to meet opposition; though with judicious persons, the silliness and impertinency of the Exceptions urg'd against it, often confirms them the more in the truth

or expediency of what such shall oppose. I shall now therefore, with all the faithfulness I can, propose and solve those little Cavils (for they can be called no other) with which our Adversaries endeavour to perplex this so pious a Proposal.

Object. 1. They say, *They are unwilling to become bound, and to lay an Obligation upon themselves and their Posterities.* But for

Ans. To this, I humbly beseech all indifferent persons to consider, if there be any thing more than covetousness at the bottom. They must and do own the thing in it self fit and reasonable, only they will not be bound: But what if they should be bound already, and by an higher Law than what is Humane? What if God and Conscience have long since laid an Obligation upon them, to as much at least if not more? Certainly to evade this, they must answer all the Arguments that have been learnedly urged to prove Tythes to be *jure Divino*: and if they are so; (as they are under a severe penalty to enquire whether they are or no) they are already bound; and the Law of God and Conscience obliges them; and they sin if they pay them not; and our Church knows no such thing as venial sins; the consequent of all allow'd sin is death; and death is a most dreadful thing: and far better it were that a small share, nay all those perishing vanities should be parted with, than that most tremendous Doom should be incurr'd.

But

But for the obliging Posterity, can they think that they will not have souls as immortal and precious as their own? or that they will not down to all Generations be under the same Tyes and Obligations to be so kind and tender to them, as they are now of theirs? And will not they also be bound by the same Laws of the Everlasting Gospel, and have the same impressions of natural Conscience? If not, then indeed there's something in the Objection, That Posterity should not be obliged. But if it should prove otherwise, (which I suppose none of the Opponents will deny) then they must acknowledge it fit that there should be the same provision made for their souls then, as for their own now. And that it may be very highly charitable in them, to secure their posterity as far as they can in this particular; considering but the too sad defection of the Age to solemnity and Irreligion, and a sad neglect of the most solemn and sacred things. And farther, what's not to be despised, it will rather transmit down their Names and Memories sweet and fragrant to posterity; and the Generations yet unborn will have reason to bless God for the Piety and Goodness of their Religious Ancestors: which I suppose is as much as I need reply to this first Objection. But then

2. 'Tis objected farther, *How can any give away their Freehold? That this were an high injustice and oppression.* To which I have one or two things to

Ans. 1. That 'tis a very great mistake; That part of every ones Estate which is Gods, and ought to be paid to him in his more immediate Officers and Ministers, can't properly be called their Freehold: And that the most High has a peculiar share in, and expects it should be paid accordingly out of every ones encrease, for the upholding his Worship to the everlasting benefit of their souls, I suppose no Christian will deny. Whereby if Secular Powers should enact such Laws as should compel men to do their duty, even whether they will or no, can they be taxed of Oppression or Injustice? Now that many persons if left to themselves, as to many Offices of due Charity and Justice, would make but little scruple of discharging them, an every days Observation too sadly evinces: were not this true beyond question, we should need no Laws and Statutes to raise a competent Maintenance for the Poor; a thing not so generally known in some other parts of the World. But then there's hardly any thing besides, wherein many persons need such Laws and Obligations than in this present particular: for 'tis observed of many, that they will sometimes frequent one Church, and then another, because they will contribute to neither; they are for a cheap Religion, and would be saved *gratis*; or if 'twill cost them any thing, they are ready to think it a dear bargain, and so fare it well. This was our Adversaries own complaint heretofore, as
you

you might observe in the fore-quoted passage of *The Case of Exeter*, and that which they thought sufficient to justify the Equity of their Act upon; so that if persons would so readily shift their Collar from their Duty, and let the whole weight of it fall upon the shoulders of a few well-minded people, 'tis no Iniquity, but Justice and Reason that they should be commanded and obliged by Humane Authority to it. But then

2. if it be supposed (what cannot be granted) that they were under no tye or obligation of God or Conscience, is every Tax and Imposition imposed upon Subjects presently an Oppression and an Injury? Is it not referr'd to those in Authority? (and don't every Commoner of this Kingdom throw up his consent to it in the Vote for his Bourgeois or Representative in Parliament?) I say, is it not referred to those wise and prudent Persons to impose and lay on such Taxes as they see conducing to the publick good? Do they sin, and commit a violence upon mens Estates, if they find just reason to require them to part with some little share of them for the safety and benefit of the Community? If certainly this were true Doctrine, His MAJESTY would have no more Rates granted; and if no more Rates, no more Sea-men; and if no more Sea-men, no more Navy-Royal; and what's the next consequent to that, none can be so short sighted as not to discern. Now whether

whether this be for a publick good, of very great use, yea necessity, as has been formerly proved, I suppose none who really wish the quiet and peace of Church and Kingdom, will at all scruple. But then a

3 *Object.* Is against the proposed Patrons for the several Vacancies, *That 'tis not fit the Chamber,* (for I have not heard the Church, the Alternate Patrons, concern'd in the Cavil) *but that several Parishes should be allowed the choice of their own Ministers.* But for

Ans. This favours as much of Fanaticism, as the other did of Avarice; and the Answer I shall return to it shall be in a few particulars. As

1. 'Twas their own Law when time was: even that Act obtained to this purpose procured a right and priviledge to the Chamber as long as it lasted, always to nominate and appoint their Minister; and why 'twas so fit then and not now, must be for the same reason as before; they may not think the present Government of the City so modled to their factious disloyal Principles; if they were but for their tooth, and would promote their designs, then would they be ready to repose it again in their sleek and soft boloms. But then

2. This would be a practice for which I know not a precedent hardly any where throughout the Nation. 'Tis what has been the design indeed of Anarchy

chy and Fanaticism, was much applauded and practised in the late sad times; but what the success of that has been, this poor bleeding Church and Kingdom are but too deplorable as well as recent testifications. And for what some impertinently clamour concerning the City of *London* in this particular, that they enjoy this privilege in the late legal settlement appointed for the Clergy thereof, is most notoriously untrue.

3. This would rather be an inlet to Discontents and Confusions in a Parish, than a maintenance of (what's so highly every ones duty) Love and Amity. If they would have it referr'd to the Parishes determination, I would fain know of them whom they mean by the Parish; Do they mean the major part of it? What if their Judgment should be opposed by the wiser and better part: for the wiser and better is not always the greater. But if by the Parish they shall mean the most judicious, which among them shall determine who they are? for most persons will rather give place as to matters of Fortune, (as they are called) though they are not often very ready to this neither, rather than to those of the Mind; a man had much rather be reputed poor, than a fool; and the greater number will be ready strongly to urge that which they think will compensate the other defect if there be one, that they have as precious souls to save, that they must pay as well as they, and that

in their Judgments their own is the wiser Election. These are very likely to be the Consequents of such a *Repositum*; and that 'twill produce a sad feud and difference in the Parish a great while after: that Party which could not be gratified, can possibly be humour-som and vexatious enough. Nor

4. Are the common people fit or competent Judges of a Ministers Parts or Learning, Worth or Abilities. They are often more led by their Fancies than their Judgments. A sweet Cadence, a melting or a stentorous Voice, some affected Modes or Glances, may; and often have done so with the Vulgar, pass for rare and admirable **Qualifications of a worthy Minister of the Gospel.** And I am bold farther to say, That I have known some instances my self, that when several Ministers of far different Parts and Learning have stood as Candidates for a Living, the whole inclination of the Parish has run out in all points of Worth and Learning (in the certain knowledge of far more able Judges than themselves) upon the far inferiour Person. And they have clubb'd their Fists to a Petition to the Patron, that the man of Noise and Clamour, for all him of Learning and Piety, may be for their **Money.** This I doubt not has been often the Observation of divers others. But then

5. The Law already has sufficiently secured the People of a Negative Voice, if they see reason: and if they see none, why should they desire it? *i. e.*

If any person be offered to be obtruded upon them, either Heterodox in Judgment, loose in Manners, or unskilled in Letters, the Court is open, they may caveat against him. And if in any of those they can make good their charge, which ought to be proved and not said, all Processes being to be *secundum allegata & probata*, they will assuredly find redress. But if none of these can be proved, but the Person tendered to them be of sound Faith, sober Life, and good Learning, why is not such a one as much to be received by them, as if they themselves should first of all name and recommend him?

Nor lastly, does this Objection seem to argue that Esteem and Honour which Modesty and Religion obliges them to pay to their Governours. For we are to be subject (which imports not only Obedience, but Esteem and Love) not to Kings only, but to all also as are in Authority under them. Whereas this seems severely to tax them of great weakness of Parts, of unfaithfulness to their Trusts, and that so many persons, or the major part of them of the eminentest note in the City, should all prove Knaves or Fools: That either they should not have a competent Judgment, at least not so good a one as the Persons over whom they are, and are appointed to govern: or if they might (after some trouble) be allowed that, that yet they had not so much Honesty or Religion, and that they would bring in a Person

on purpose to starve and destroy their souls. Whereas 'tis known beyond contradiction, that the present Chamber consists of as eminent Parts, of as large Judgments, of as great Integrity, and sound Religion, as have adorned it (*absit invidia*) these many years. And what is to be considered too, it consists of Persons chosen out of most of the Parishes in the City, and that there is hardly one of them if united, but has one or more that are either Justices of the Peace, or are of the Common Council living in it, and belonging to it. And if they could be supposed to be negligent in the choice of a fit Minister for other Parishes, can any imagine in reason, that they should be so for those to which they themselves and Families immediately belong, and that they should be negligent of their own and **C**hildrens Souls? As if Religion would not be so dear and tender to them as 'tis to others, but that they will inevitably grow very sceptical and indifferent about it: so that there must certainly be something else besides Reason which thus sways mens passions, and makes them thus importune.

And however it may not be observed of them, (or if it be, so much the worse) the **O**bjecti**o**n tacitely reflects upon the whole Government and Constitution of the Church and Kingdom, as if that were not so wisely and prudently provided for as it should be, because it has excluded particular Parishes from
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the constitutive choice of their Minister. Though for this I am most confident, that the Piety and Prudence both of the Church and Chamber are so great, as that they will never inforce that Person upon any Parish, whom the wiser and truly pious part of it shall with just reason except against. And what can be farther desired with any sober Judgment, I cannot well imagine. But there is

Last Object. One Objection farther, which I am apt to believe weighs deepest in their prejudices, *That this will be a way to ruine the Cause; Persons generally not being so willing or so well furnished to maintain two Ministers, one by Law, another by Benevolence.* For

Ans. --- *Hinc illæ Lachrymæ!* Here I doubt is the true pinch of the matter, and that which makes the Party sting and throw as if *æstro Perciti*. But I suppose this nor needs nor deserves any reply; but to name it before such Patrons of Unity and Uniformity as your selves, is to confute it. I should rather suppose it may be one of the best Arguments to back and push on the Bill to perfection, if it may any way conduce (which is the great matter the Adverse Party fears) to so happy an effect as the abating Schism and Faction. And truly if this may any way obtain to the Composure of unhappy Differences, and for the reducing people from Names and Parties to a sober and sincere Religion, I cannot doubt but it will weigh as much for the expediting of it, as I trust its

Equity now does and will. How sad an evil Division is, all are ready to acknowledge; even those themselves as contribute most unto it: but how very groundless, unwarrantable, unjust, the present Separation is, has been elsewhere fully enough demonstrated. Though 'tis more inexcusably so, in this City, which is acknowledged by all indifferent persons to have as faithful constant practical Preaching, with the Devotion of the Church as duly and solemnly celebrated, as any where else in the Kingdom. These are all the most considerable Objections that ever I heard started against this *Pious Bill*, as it has been deservedly stiled: If I knew, or my fancy could suggest other, I would certainly have brought them on the stage. But that there is nothing else in these more than meer empty noise, is sufficiently discernable by a very ordinary capacity.

And yet, Sirs, after all this, we cannot secure your Patience and Goodness from being harrassed and tortured by a continual jarring upon such harsh and untunable strings: And 'tis more than probable, that you may find many a Pragmatical Agent, and some Regiments of Names and Hands marching to your House, to obstruct the birth of this laudable Design; 'tis no more than what may well be expected from a busie Faction, which never spared cost or pains to hinder any thing they thought conducing to the peace or better settlement of the Church. But, Sir, when
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the Wisdom of the Honourable House of Parliament shall take it into their Consideration, what vast numbers of disaffected malevolent persons relate to this City, that would not (could they prevent it) suffer any such thing as Conformity to live among them, without cringing to them for subsistence, it must be as good an Argument as we could wish for the effectual speedy drawing on their fears, but all good mens hearty wishes in this particular : For let it, whensoever 'twill, be examined, it will be found that it has no Opponents among us but from Principles of Fanaticism or Avarice ; The most Loyal Conformable Persons of the City very heartily wishing the accomplishment of it ; not for that they begrudge what they contribute so liberally to the maintenance of their present Clergy, but 'tis very unequally that others should be exempted their due proportion, who are now content to hear and partake in other Solemnities, at others cost, and not their own. We shall humbly commend the Equity and Necessity of the whole Affair (than whom we cannot possibly expect more equal or able Judges) to your Honourable House : *God of His infinite Mercy protect and prosper You all in this and all other the weighty Affairs of Church and State, which now lie before You, as may be eminently for His Glory, the Honour of our Dread Sovereign, with the Peace and Welfare of the whole Nation.*

It was long since time (most worthy Sir) that I should begin to ease your patience; but I hope my great desire of contributing what I could to so excellent an Undertaking, will obtain your pardon for this boldness. If my poor Endeavours shall meet any happy success for promoting this so publick Good, I shall have my End, and let God have the Glory. 'Twas that, and not my own private advantage which was the main occasion of the exposing my self to censure, and presuming upon the interrupting your great Concerns at this time. 'Tis more than probable, that if these hasty Conceptions shall be exposed to publick view, that they must run the Gauntlet of various and severe censures: And possibly in nothing more than that they will say I am my own Advocate, and drive on my own private Advantage. But let them enjoy the pleasure of the sarcasm whoever like or crack it: I ever thought, that if Duty and Interest were both joined together, that he was no wise man that would part them asunder; or let go his Duty, because something of Interest was fastened to it. 'Twas the advice of a late excellent Bishop Prelate to his Clergy, *That they should diminish nothing of their Duty, though People object they speak for themselves, and in their own Cause; for counsel is not the worse, but the better, if it be profitable both to him that gives, and to him that takes it.* I have long expected it should have been done by
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some abler Pen ; but after a great patience understanding of none that were resolved to appear in its publick defence, I was fully purposed to shew my readiness to plead its humble Apologie ; and whatever the success will be , yet *magnis tamen excidit ausis* . . . I have said nothing with design of distasting any. If it be true and reasonable, it needs no farther defence ; if otherwise, it deserves none.

What I have farther , is only the humble request once more of your pardon, if my earnest desires of serving that publick Design you have been pleased to appear in , should unwillingly have betrayed me to any thing unbecoming : withal promising, (what I grant but a mean expiation) That I shall but once offend in this kind, though I shall ever be ambitious of the honour to be known by the stile of

Your Worships

Most humble and faithfully devoted Servant.

J P.

F I N I S.

